

2003 Annual Report



*The Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission
was established in 1994 to promote, mobilize, and support the efforts of all
Nebraskans who are united in strengthening their communities, state, and nation
through volunteer and community service.*

Table of Contents

FROM THE COMMISSION CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.....	2
THE NEBRASKA VOLUNTEER SERVICE COMMISSION	
WHAT IT IS.....	3
HOW IT WORKS.....	4
AND ITS IMPACT	5
SERVING PEOPLE, SERVING COMMUNITIES	
ALTERNATIVES IN RETENTION	6
CHILD AND FAMILY SUPPORT TEAM.....	6
COMMUNITY ACTION NEBRASKA AMERICORPS.....	6
STRONG URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS	7
SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND FARMING INITIATIVE	7
THE NELSON FELLOWS OF SOUTHWEST NEBRASKA	7
THE NEBRASKA TEACHER CORPS AMERICORPS PROGRAM	8
URBAN REVITALIZATION PROGRAM	8
YOUTH BUILD	8
DEVELOPING AN ETHIC OF SERVICE	10
RECOGNIZING THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING	
THE FIRST LADY'S AWARDS.....	11
THE GOVERNOR'S POINTS OF LIGHT AWARDS.....	12
LEVERAGING DOLLARS AND VOLUNTEERS	13
PARTNERS IN SERVICE.....	14
LOOKING FORWARD.....	15



Citizenship Flag and
Americorps Program Director

From the Commission Chair and Executive Director...

2003 Commissioners

Stephanie Johanns,
Honorary Chair

Jamesena Moore, Chair

John Manna, Vice-Chair

Susan Aguilar
Patrick Beans
Colleen Bostock-Zoubek
Beatty Brasch
Cynthia Buettner
Lana Burr
W. Gary Gates
Doug Gibbs
Yvonne Norton Leung
Arthur May
Diann Muhlbach
Rick Nation
G.W. "Gerry" Osborn
Jim Pace
Ron Sedlacek
Bruce Trautwein
Lois Wine

Commission Staff

Executive Director
Debra Hartmann

Program Officer
Collena Laschanky

Fiscal/Office Manager
Janet Schmidt

Training Officer
Karen Whitson

Dear Friends:

Ten years ago the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission answered the call to service through the AmeriCorps program-- a national, structured service program for individuals interested in devoting a year or two of their lives to meet their communities' needs. AmeriCorps is the bedrock of what we do, but it is not all we do. The Commission does much more.

Read on to see where our journey has taken us and how the Commission leverages federal dollars to more than double their value in Nebraska communities. See how community challenges are met, young people are engaged in civic service, and volunteers are thanked and honored for their work.

The Commission offers resources to Nebraska communities in the form of partnerships, funding, technical assistance and information.

We invite you to join us as we continue our journey and look to the future. We will continue to provide leadership for volunteerism and community service and strengthen our state's security and disaster preparedness in partnerships with the Citizen Corps and others. The Commission will continue to help communities address problems by allocating AmeriCorps members and funds to leverage other resources. We will grow citizen service in Nebraska.

In Service,

Jamesena Grimes Moore
Chair



Debra Hartmann
Executive Director



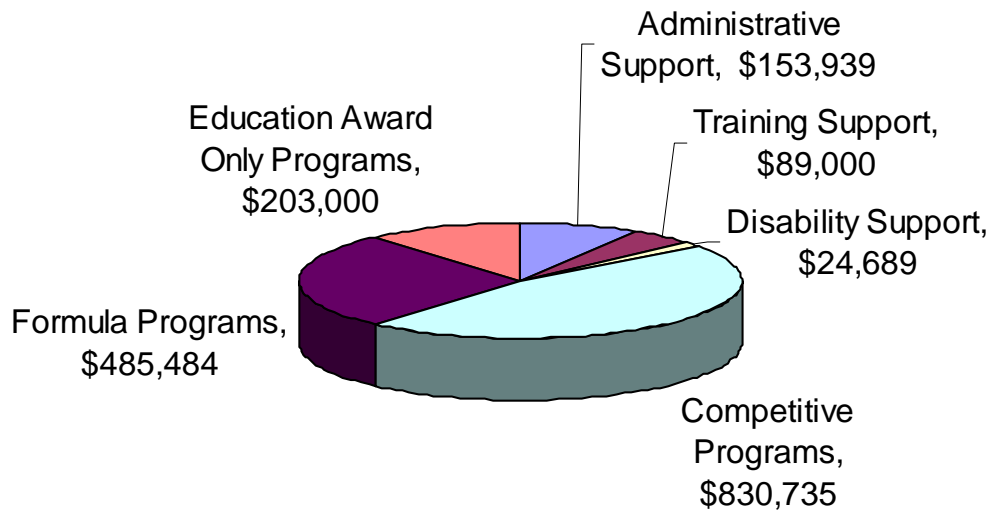
The Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission...

...What it is

The Commission is 100 percent federally funded through the Corporation for National and Community Service. The Commission oversees the AmeriCorps service program in Nebraska and promotes volunteerism and service statewide. AmeriCorps programs provide participants (called “members”) with a full or part-time service experience, a living stipend, and an education award following successful completion of service.

No State General Funds are used to support the Commission. In addition, the Commission broadly supports and recognizes volunteers statewide. In 2003, the Commission’s AmeriCorps grantees contributed thirty-eight percent of the cost of their programs. In addition, the Commission annually raises more than \$150,000 in in-kind donations to support the Commission’s administrative work.

Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission 2003 Funding



...How it works

The Commission is made up of 15 - 25 Governor appointed volunteers who set policy and direction for its work. Three Commission Committees (Outreach, Programs, and Organizational Development) work with staff support to plan and implement the Commission's work:

- The Outreach Committee develops and expands resources and awareness of the Commission and its mission.
- The Program Committee builds a strong Commission AmeriCorps program portfolio by facilitating a strategic grants process and offers continuous support for program excellence.
- The Organizational Development Committee builds a solid Commission made of individuals actively involved in its mission and in ensuring its success by building leadership, continuous improvement and excellence from within.



Commissioner Art May and Commission Staff Member Karen Whitson

Each year, the Commission publishes a Request for Proposal (RFP) for new and continuing AmeriCorps grants. It supports the ongoing training and monitoring of AmeriCorps grantees to ensure that the state maintains the highest quality of AmeriCorps programs possible.

In addition to sponsoring AmeriCorps programs, the Commission holds an annual signature event, The Governor's Conference on Community Service. The Conference brings together traditional and national service volunteers and community leaders to network and learn about the latest in community volunteering and development.



Janet Schmidt, Commission Fiscal and Office Manager, and the Commission's display at the Governor's Conference

...And its impact

Success by the numbers	
27,053	Volunteers organized by AmeriCorps members
18,262	Students participated in service-learning activities
8,462	People received independent living assistance
2,818	Individuals received job development or placement counseling
2,349	Community education activities performed
2,173	K – 12 students received tutoring assistance
1,280	Students were mentored, counseled or provided with out-of-school enrichment activities
888	Individuals benefited from conflict mediation
635	Adults benefited from Adult GED training
601	People received computer literacy training
2	Houses built by YouthBuild AmeriCorps members



Serving People, Serving Communities...

Nine AmeriCorps programs served Nebraskans in 2003



... Alternatives in Retention

College of St. Mary

Douglas County -- Omaha

This AmeriCorps program provided direct assistance to "at risk" students through mentoring, tutoring, problem solving, special programs, referrals to campus and community resources, and other intervention services increasing student retention. Retention rates are now higher than the national average for a school of this size and makeup.



... Child and Family Support Team

Lincoln Action Program

Lancaster County -- Lincoln

Members served in teams providing specific support services to clients of Lincoln Action Program. Member activities were structured around meeting the basic needs of children, helping children through education and familial self-sufficiency, and helping children through family development. The overarching goal of this program was to maximize the productive advancement of children.

... Community Action Nebraska AmeriCorps

Community Action of Nebraska

Scottsbluff, Morrill, Dawes, Sheridan, Hall, Merrick, Holt, Hamilton, Lancaster, Saline, Gage, Jefferson, Otoe, and Thayer Counties---Cities of Scottsbluff, Gering, Morrill, Hays Springs, Chadron, Gordon, Rushville, O'Neill, Ewing, Central City, Chapman, Grand Island, Lincoln, Beatrice, Nebraska City, Wilber, Crete, Fairbury, and Deshler

Members worked to reduce youth violence through teaching peaceful conflict-resolution skills, and to increase academic success by tutoring and providing mentoring support to students. Services were provided in primary and secondary schools, Head Start programs, juvenile diversion programs, and several community-based and faith-based organizations.

... Strong Urban Neighborhoods

*Lutheran Family Services
Douglas County -- Omaha*



This program implemented a community-based asset mapping plan to address the expressed and evident problems in the neighborhood. SUN provided a multifaceted and multicultural center of activities and services that were relevant, affordable, and convenient to neighborhood residents. Members worked to increase positive family functioning, increase access to economic opportunities and to decrease crime and drug-related behaviors in the community.

... Sustainable Food and Farming Initiative

*Sustainable Agriculture Society
Lancaster, Otoe, Johnson, Hall, Webster, Furnas, Phelps, Pierce, and Scottsbluff Counties. Cities and town of Lincoln, Syracuse, Tecumseh, Doniphan, Red Cloud, Guiderock, Cambridge, Holdrege, Plainview, Minden, Gering, and Verdigre.*
This program raised awareness of the benefits of consuming locally-produced food, and increase demand in the area of sustainable agriculture. Members served at several Rural Conservation & Development sites across the state, providing education to consumers and producers on new ways to market local sustainable food products.

... The Nelson Fellows of Southwest Nebraska

*The Nelson Institute
Dundy, Chase, Perkins, Hayes, Hitchcock, Frontier, Red Willow, Furnas and Gosper Counties. Towns of Benkelman, Imperial, Wauneta, Grant, Hayes Center, Stratton, Palisade, Trenton, Culbertson, Curtis, Maywood, Eustis and McCook. Profiles & outreach to Indianola, Bartley, Cambridge, Holbrook, Wilsonville, Lebanon, Danbury and Elwood*



This program addressed current social and economic issues faced by rural communities with programs intending to help stabilize demographic and economic trends. Members helped bridge the gaps between service providers and residents, especially in the areas of technical assistance and training. The Nelson Fellows focused on sustainable community development projects, leveraging resources and building development capacity within rural communities.

... The Nebraska Teacher Corps AmeriCorps Program

Nebraska Consortium for Service Learning at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln
Statewide coverage



The Nebraska Teacher Corps' primary objective was to involve students, K-12, in service-learning projects that were incorporated into the classroom curriculum. Members and students recruited the participation of many community volunteers to complete these projects in schools across Nebraska. The variety of projects was diverse, including environment, education, public safety, and other human needs including many projects in response to the 9-11 attack. Nebraska Teacher Corps members connected their service activities to virtually every aspect of the state curriculum.

... Urban Revitalization Program

City of Lincoln

Lancaster County

Members increased participation in year-round library programs, enhancing the ability of low-income, minority and refugee children and their families to use library services by establishing partnerships and working with Lincoln Public Schools and Community Learning Centers. Members also increased opportunities for "at risk" youth, via after-school clubs and enrichment activities, to help kids acquire social interaction skills and gain from cross-cultural experiences.



... Youth Build

Lincoln Action Program

Lancaster County – Lincoln



Members of YouthBuild programs are high school dropouts seeking to complete their GEDs and gain job skills. This team collaborated with Habitat for Humanity to build affordable housing for low-income families. YouthBuild members attended GED preparation classes, career planning activities, construction skills classes, and leadership development seminars. In addition, members served through

Lincoln Action Program's Victim's Outreach program assisting victims of crime, and domestic violence.



AmeriCorps Member Angela Lee –
Lincoln Action Program



AmeriCorps Member Andrew Mattson – Urban
Revitalization Project at Elliott Elementary School in
Lincoln

Developing an ethic of service...

The Commission coordinates activities for national service days:

- Make a Difference Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Join Hands Day
- National Youth Service Day.

Whether it's cleaning up a neighborhood, collecting food for a local pantry, helping kids learn to read, or organizing a message campaign to send to U.S. soldiers far from home, the Commission works with community leaders, AmeriCorps programs and interested citizens to honor themselves and their neighbors by doing good.



Above: Student in costume for theater production coordinated by AmeriCorps members with the Urban Revitalization Project.

Left: Members from YouthBuild, Community Action Nebraska and Teacher Corps helped Commissioner Bruce Trautwein put a roof on the Beatrice Youth Center for Join Hands Day.

Below: AmeriCorps members at swearing in ceremony



Recognizing the value of volunteering...

Volunteers are truly at the heart of Nebraska and “The Good Life” that we enjoy.

Through two awards programs, the Commission recognizes the efforts of seniors, youth, church groups, AmeriCorps members, students, businesses, local governments, neighborhood groups, and concerned individuals who change lives every day through the thousands of small acts of kindness they perform.

...The First Lady’s Awards

The First Lady’s Awards for Outstanding Community Service, awarded at the annual Governor’s Conference on Community Service, honor the outstanding efforts of everyday Nebraskans who have the courage to care, to reach out, and to use their talents to give back to others.



First Lady Stephanie Johanns
and Betty Anne Thaut

2003 First Lady’s Outstanding Community Service Award Winners	
Adult	Bette Anne Thaut, Beatrice
Youth	Ryan Peschel, Osmond
Retiree	Ellen Kapperman, Lincoln
Group	Sons of the American Legion Squadron #53, Grand Island
Volunteer in the Arts	Nebraska Library Commission
Business	First National Bank of Omaha
AmeriCorps Member	Susana Sall, Lincoln
AmeriCorps Program	Strong Urban Neighborhoods Program at Lutheran Family Services, Omaha
Service Learning K - 12	Tom Krueger, Grand Island
Service Learning Higher Education	Bill Williams, Kearney

...The Governor's Points of Light Awards

The Nebraska Governor's Points of Light Awards are designed to honor those who have made a commitment to service in Nebraska and are helping to meet critical needs in their communities. In keeping with the spirit of the President's Summit for America's Future, service by Points of Light recipients should reflect the fulfillment of one of the following five PROMISES for our children, youth, and community:

- Ongoing relationships with caring adults
- Safe places with structured activities during non-school hours
- A Healthy Start and Future
- Marketable Skills Through Effective Education
- Opportunities to Give Back Through Community Service



Governor Mike Johanns and
Emily Wemhoff

Youth Winners

Kimberly Bisanz, Tekamah
Wilber-Clatonia High School Student Aides
Emily Wemhoff, Creston
Brookside Church, Omaha



Nebraska Governor Mike Johanns and
students from the Chadron State College

Group Winners

The Ronald McDonald House Community Dinner Program
Seward County Bridges, Inc.
A & W Youth Group, Osmond
Chadron State College



Governor Johanns and
Karene Ryan

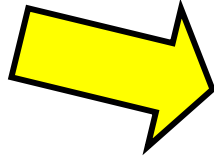
Adult Winners

Margaret Piper, Brock
Karene Ryan, Blair
Peggy Kirby, Lincoln
Dave Nelson, Gretna

Leveraging dollars and volunteers...

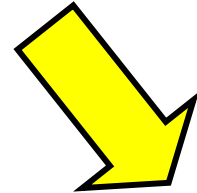
Federal
Investment

\$1,786,647



Number of volunteers
organized by
AmeriCorps members

27,053 volunteers



Volunteer Hours
Generated

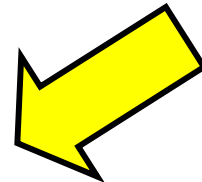
63,111 hours



Combined Economic
Impact to Nebraska –
\$4,772,478

Value of
Volunteer
Labor

\$1,043,856



Educational
Awards Earned by
AmeriCorps
Members

\$1,941,975

Impact on Nebraska's
Future –

PRICELESS



Partners in Service...

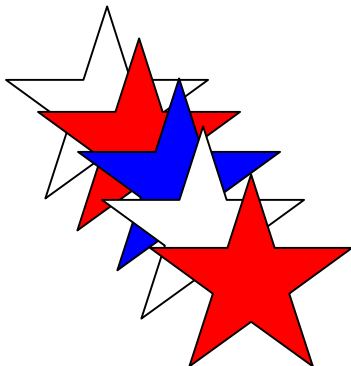
The Commission emphasizes service through its funded AmeriCorps programs, supporting, and recognizing volunteers. It also supports other Corporation for National Service funded programs, like AmeriCorps VISTA, and the National Senior Service Corps through training and technical assistance. The Commission works closely with the Corporation State Office, who administrates these other service programs. The Corporation State Office has a permanent non-voting position on the Nebraska Commission.



Citizen Corps programs build on the successful efforts that are in place in many communities around the country to prevent crime and respond to emergencies. Programs that started through local innovation are the foundation for Citizen Corps and the national approach to citizen participation in community safety.



The Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission, in partnership with the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, provides administrative oversight for six Citizen Corps Council sub-grantees in the state.



VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY SERVICE FOUNDATION OF NEBRASKA

The Volunteer and Community Service Foundation of Nebraska is a companion non-profit to the Commission. The Foundation is separate from the Commission, with its own board and bylaws. Its mission is to provide financial support to the Commission, Commission-funded programs and volunteer recognition activities.

Looking forward!

Recent reports by the U.S. Department of Labor indicate that the percentage of the American population who volunteer has increased to 28.8 percent in 2003, up from 27.4 percent the previous year.

The number of Americans who volunteered following the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, has increased as even more Americans step forward to serve their communities.

The Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission looks forward to strengthening structured service programs, like AmeriCorps, during the upcoming year. The Commission seeks to provide more Nebraskans than ever the opportunity to serve their neighbors, their community and their country through volunteer and community service.



“If someone listens, or stretches out a hand, or whispers a kind word of encouragement, or attempts to understand a lonely person, extraordinary things begin to happen.”

-- Loretta Girzartis

The Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission sponsored this “Support Our Troops” project on Make A Difference Day. Students from Park Middle School LIFT (Lincoln Initiative for Tutoring) Program worked with AmeriCorps members to put messages on an AmeriCorps banner and sent it off to the 4th Infantry Division, Ironhorse Company, stationed in Tikrit, Iraq.

